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FARES MAY SOAR AS AIRLINES SEEK REMOVAL OF PRICE CAP

Citing the steep increase in aviation turbine fuel, private carriers have asked the government to do away with the cap on airfares

IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO BECOME VIABLE: CARRIERS

Since the beginning of January, the cost of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) has risen by ₹38,902 per kilo litre to ₹1,12,924. Rising ATF prices, coupled with the pandemic-induced distress, have deeply impacted the profits of airlines, say industry sources. In such a scenario, only removing the cap on passenger fares can make carriers viable, say airline executives

VISTARA, INDIGO PUSH FOR CHANGE

- According to industry sources, Vistara and IndiGo are pushing for the removal of the airfare cap. The airlines' executives are planning to meet government officials to take this further
- Airlines say the government's price regulation is preventing them from recovering losses incurred over the past two years

50%

AVIATION TURBINE FUEL ACCOUNTS FOR UP TO HALF OF AN AIRLINE'S TOTAL COSTS

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

STATUS CHECK

UKRAINE

Putin's kin face curbs

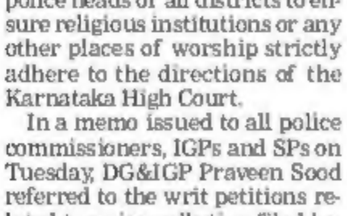
- US sanctions Putin's two adult daughters, toughens penalties on Russian banks in retaliation for war crimes in Ukraine

- At Vatican City, Pope kisses battered Ukrainian flag from Bucha, where evidence points to intentional killings of civilians during its occupation by Russian troops
- Investigators in Ukraine collect evidence of widespread killings of civilians, some shot at close range, others with their hands bound or their flesh burned

SRI LANKA

Starvation warning

Parliament speaker warns of starvation across Sri Lanka due to acute shortage of essentials, fears blackouts will get worse | But chief government whip says President Gotabaya Rajapaksa will not resign under any circumstance



Hundreds of medical students storm health ministry in Colombo. Spontaneous protests across the island where people queued to buy fuel

PAKISTAN

Loaded observation

- Pakistan Supreme Court Chief Justice says judiciary can interfere in parliamentary procedure if there is violation of constitutional propriety
- Court seeks minutes of National Security Council meeting that discussed the foreign plot issue, which was the ruse to reject the no-trust motion
- Hearing put off by a day, short order by the bench possible after the end of the hearing
- Pakistan President pushes the Election Commission to propose dates for general elections | P11

India on the side of peace in Ukraine

Nation strongly against conflict, no solution possible by shedding blood, Jaishankar tells the LS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

INDIA is strongly against the Russia-Ukraine conflict as no solution can be arrived at by shedding blood, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar told the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. He was replying to a debate on the situation in Ukraine.

"If New Delhi has chosen a side, it is the side of peace and for an immediate end to violence. All members would agree that India's approach should be guided by its national beliefs and values, national interest and by its national strategy," he said.

"In this day and age, dialogue and diplomacy are the right answer to any disputes," he added.

Referring to the evacuation of students in Ukraine, he said it was the most challenging mission carried out by India yet. "Had the four Union ministers not gone to countries neighbouring Ukraine, India would not have got the same level of cooperation," he said.

A TV grab of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar replying to a debate in the Lok Sabha on the situation in Ukraine, in New Delhi on Wednesday | PTI

As for the question of continuing education of the evacuated students, he said talks are on with countries like Hungary, Romania, Kazakhstan and Poland. Also, Ukraine has decided there would be a relaxation for students on promotion from the third to the fourth year course.

"As for the students in the sixth year, the degrees would be accorded without taking the mandatory CROC-2 examination. The criterion would solely be academic performance," Jaishankar told the House. He informed that Hungary had offered to allow students evacuated from Ukraine to complete their medical courses at its universities.

Talking about the civilian killings in the Ukrainian city of Bucha, Jaishankar said India is deeply disturbed by the reports. "We strongly condemn the killings that have taken place there. This is an extremely serious matter and we support the call for an independent investigation."

He said attributing political colour to India's actions vis-a-vis the Ukraine situation was unfortunate. His pushback came on a day when the White House reiterated the US view that it is not in India's interest to accelerate or increase imports of Russian energy and other commodities.

Regarding importing Russian crude, he said that India is buying less than 1% of its requirement from Moscow, whereas many countries have imported 20 times more than India.

Jaishankar also highlighted that India was supporting the world amid the conflict by providing fuel and food to economically battered Sri Lanka.

As for the hike in fuel prices, he said it was an outcome of the Ukraine conflict, added it needs to be ensured that the common man isn't burdened.

Aakar stopped from leaving country at KIA

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

AAKAR PATEL, chair, Amnesty International India (AII), was on Wednesday morning stopped at the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA), Bengaluru from leaving the country after he was informed that he was on the Exit Control List (ECL) by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in a case of alleged Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) violation by AII in 2019. Patel was named in the FIR and was summoned. He had joined the investigation in December, 2020.

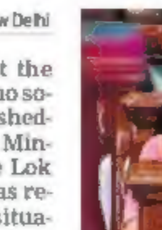
On Wednesday, Patel was on his way to Boston by a 6.50 am flight by the British Airways to deliver a series of lectures at the University of California (UC), Berkeley, New York University and University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, when he was stopped at the KIA. "I was going to deliver a lecture on attack on social media at the UC, Berkely; speak about my latest book – 'Price of the Modi Years' – in NYU and participate in an interaction on social media, in Michigan University. I had got my passport, which was impounded in 2020 in Tweets case, released from the Gujarat court for the visit. I was shocked when the immigration officials at KIA told me that I cannot leave the country because of a travel ban. I showed them the court order and my passport, but they told me that the CBI had issued a Look out Circular (LoC) against me," Patel told TNIE.

He added that he called the CBI officer, who was investigating the case against AII. P5

Netas react strongly, Muskaan's father rejects al-Qaeda's praise for daughter

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

LEADER of the terror outfit al-Qaeda, **Ayman al-Zawahiri**, praising the second-year BCom student Muskaan Khan for chanting 'Allah-hu-Akbar' in reply to saffron-clad male students chanting 'Jai Sri Ram' at her college in Mandya as she entered wearing a hijab in February, has evoked strong reactions from political sections, including Karnataka Home Minister Araga Jnanendra saying it is a vindication of their suspicions of an "unseen hand" behind the "conspiracy" of blowing the hijab row out of proportion.



But the standout reaction came from Muskaan's father Mohammed Hussain, who, without mincing words, distanced his daughter, himself and his family from the al-Qaeda leader singing praises of Muskaan.

He said, "I was not aware of this (al-Zawahiri's video), nor have I ever seen al-Zawahiri before. I only got to know when media houses came to me showing the video. He has said something in Arabic. People say whatever they want, which is unnecessarily causing trouble. Such incidents are disturbing peace. We don't want him to talk about us, as he is not at all related to us. It is wrong and is an attempt to divide us... We are all (across religious lines) living here with love and trust."

He said that he showed the video to his daughter and told her it was wrong and reminded her that she was still a student. "She wants to study," he added. In the video, al-Zawahiri says Muskaan's defiance of saffron-clad men had emboldened the spirit of jihad and awakened the Muslim community. P4

MUSKAAN KHAN TO SHIFT COLLEGE?

After the hijab row, Muskaan Khan has not attended classes and did not even face the exams. While her father confirmed that his daughter had not attended the exams, sources in the college said that she has sought a no-objection certificate and transfer certificate to shift to another college.

TAKE YOUR SHOT

April 5 - 13,52,233 doses
April 6 - 13,14,615 doses

NATIONWIDE	APR 5	APR 6
Fresh cases	795	1,086
Recoveries	1,280	1,198
Deaths	58	71
KARNATAKA	**APR 5**	**APR 6**
Fresh cases	29	33
Recoveries	61	85
Deaths	0	1

Check decibel levels at religious places: DG&IGP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE state police chief has asked police heads of all districts to ensure religious institutions or any other places of worship strictly adhere to the directions of the Karnataka High Court.

In a memo issued to all police commissioners, IGPs and SPs on Tuesday, DG&IGP Praveen Sood referred to the writ petitions related to noise pollution filed before the HC and stated, "You are directed to adhere strictly to the decision of the Hon'ble High Court. You are directed to take action against Religious Institutions, Pubs, Night Clubs and any other institution and functions, if found violating The Noise Pollutions (Regulation and Control) Rules 2000 as per the Law." P4

Pawar meets Modi, flags ED action against Raut

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

A day after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) attached the property of Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut, Nationalist Congress Party supremo Sharad Pawar on Wednesday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi to raise the issue of central agencies targeting opposition leaders.

"On what basis was action taken against Sanjay Raut? What was the provocation? Just because he has made some statements and criticisms does not mean action should be taken against him. This is injustice," Pawar told reporters here. He said that it was his duty to bring to the Prime Minister's notice the injustice being done to a senior parliamentarian.

NCP chief Sharad Pawar and leader Mohammed Faizal talk to reporters | PTI

The ED had on Tuesday attached property worth ₹11 crore belonging to Raut's wife and his associates in a money-laundering investigation. P10

HC stays order making Kannada must at grad level

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

The Karnataka High Court on Wednesday stayed the state government orders making Kannada a compulsory subject in higher education as part of implementing the National Education Policy (NEP)-2020 from the academic year 2021-22.

A division bench of Chief Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi and Justice S R Krishna Kumar passed the interim order, staying the operation of two orders by the state government dated August 7, 2021 and September 15, 2021.

The court order came after hearing two separate petitions filed by the Samskrita Bharathi Karnataka Trust and KG Shivakumar and others, studying at Vijaya College at Basavanagudi in Bengaluru, against the government orders, making Kannada compulsory at the undergraduate level. P5

Hungry kya? Food delivery apps crash

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

SERVICES of food delivery majors, Swiggy and Zomato, were affected for over two hours across the country as their servers crashed during peak lunch hours on Wednesday.

Netizens took to social media to express their frustration and anger. Sources told *The New Indian Express* that the issue could be a technical glitch at the company that handles tech infrastructure for the two firms, along with many other companies.

Apps and websites of both Swiggy and Zomato were not functional for over two hours and the apps crashed continuously. In addition, those who had already ordered food from the apps were unable to check order status and get refunds.

The issue seemed to have been rectified by around 4.30 on Wednesday evening. But users continued to face issues with orders taking longer than an hour to get delivered.

EXPRESS READ

Gang sexually abuses boy; cops shoot at 2 accused

Bengaluru: Two notorious criminals from Mangaluru were shot in the leg and arrested by the Kothanur police on Tuesday evening for allegedly forcing a man to perform oral sex on them last month. The victim, who is a student, was also kidnapped and robbed of cash, mobile phone and gold ornaments. P3

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2 ತಲೋದ 1° ಬೀಲ	1 ತಲೋದ 1 ಪ್ಯಾಕೆಟ್ ಉಚಿತ
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500 ಗ್ರಾಂನ 1° ಬೀಲ	1 ತಲೋದ 1 ಪ್ಯಾಕೆಟ್ ಉಚಿತ
₹10/-(125ಗ್ರಾಂ/120ಗ್ರಾಂ)ನ 1° ಬೀಲ	₹10/-(125ಗ್ರಾಂ/120 ಗ್ರಾಂ)ನ 3 ಪೀಸಸ್ ಉಚಿತ
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